



Story From The Field

South Africa, May 2009

Silviya Simmonds, South Africa Mission Coordinator Reports:



"I wish you could have seen the joy, fun, and uplifted spirits that the visit bought. Maria said she hadn't seen the children so happy. I'm sure that experiences will be shared with you and wish we could express the atmosphere and vibes at the time. It really was a fun time for all of us.

Children, who are nurtured, flourish. I know the impact of this visit will have a lasting effect. One of the older boys cried when he saw his room painted and new duvets on the beds - we take these "little" things so much for granted, but without outside help, this would never happen.

How wonderful to put faces to names and meet everyone. What a lovely positive group -- full of fun, enthusiasm, compassion and caring and just rearing to help and get to work!!

At Mpumeleo we painted the inside of the Creche in bright orange pink and green and "what" a difference a coat of paint made to the tin walls (T shirts and shorts had, almost, more paint was on them than the walls but...) so much fun!! The teacher in charge was away for the day and when he came back said this is just what a Creche should look like. I'll send a before and after picture and the transformation is WOW!





Airline Ambassadors



While some were painting, others made a veggie garden. We had to smile -- as the rows started out a bit "dogs hind leg" style but eventually got everything down to a fine art!! This will be such a help as many of these children don't get a meal at home and only eat what they get at the Creche. Not only did this provide physical resources, but also the garden helped to empower the community to take ownership of their future and continue to improve their well-being and quality of life.

This was the springboard to giving people a sense of worth and achievement and look forward to hearing this spreading - "all" because of AAI!!

Everyone got involved in painting the inside of Maria's orphanage and again the atmosphere was one of fun and hope. As we know it's amazing what a coat of paint can do, and it has also given the kids a sense of worth and wanting to keep things clean and tidy. New bedding was bought and new duvets covers transformed the rooms from drab to wow. Maria's daughter was just overwhelmed with gratitude as no one had ever shown her so much love and caring in her life.



From part of the donation we bought/ordered iron chairs so the family will be able to sit and have a meal together. This will be a real luxury for them -- as in the past, most have had to sit on the floor.

Leaving Maria and the children was a very emotional time for all. We parted feeling a bond and closeness and a sense of destiny.

Sinthemba is a totally different experience. The children enjoyed the interaction helping the group cook a meal of spaghetti bolognaise.



Ray bought lots of interesting books and it was amazing -- everyone was absolutely engrossed with these. Some of the children took advantage of willing readers and laps and stuck to them like glue!! Again, everyone had a fun evening.

Feeding the giraffe, patting the lion cubs, and close up encounters with lions is always a very unique African experience. The group also enjoyed the Flea Market, shopping for souvenirs, and we always run out of time - especially when having so much fun!!

So again we say thank you so very much from the bottom of our hearts for the difference and impact you are having on so many childrens' lives."

Egda Avila, South Africa Mission Volunteer Writes:



"Meeting Maria was amazing. Her passion for the kids and her community is so admirable. We felt like part of the family and got so close to each of them, needless to say, it was so hard to leave.

Silvia was so helpful. We helped build a vegetable garden and painted part of Maria's house and the Creche. We also bought brand new bedding for all the big kids' rooms! They were so thankful!

In Richards Bay, we painted the walls at the Creche and also helped putting in place the rain water containers, so they can use fresh water.

Kevin, the coordinator in Richard's Bay, was amazing. He made us feel right at home. We brought a lot of school supplies for the kids at the Creche...and lots of toys. The kids went crazy for them!

This trip was an amazing experience. We can't wait to go back. We are so glad that we can be part of the amazing work...see you next time!"

